

LETTERS

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NEW NORTHERN NESTING RECORD OF THE PEREGRINE FALCON IN BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

The Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is a cosmopolitan species whose populations have declined and recovered over the past 40 yr (Cade et al. 1988, [Ed.], Peregrine Falcon populations, their management and recovery, Peregrine Fund Inc., Boise ID U.S.A.; Howell and Webb 1995, A guide to the birds of Mexico and northern Central America, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, U.K.). Its status in Mexico had been considered as vulnerable (Secretaría de Gobernación 1994, NOM-059-ECOL-1994, Especies de flora y fauna silvestres, terrestres y acuáticas, raras, endémicas, amenazadas, en peligro de extinción y sujetas a protección especial, Diario Oficial de la Federación, CDLXXXIX No.10). However, former and new nesting areas are now being occupied by breeding pairs indicating there is a need for a reevaluation of the status in Mexico. Banks (1969, The Peregrine Falcon in Baja California and the Gulf of California, in J.J. Hickey [Ed.], Peregrine Falcon populations, their biology and decline, Univ. Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI U.S.A.) referred to the peregrine as a common resident breeding on the islands off the Gulf of California. Wilbur (1987, Birds of Baja California, Univ. California Press, Berkeley, CA U.S.A) pointed out the absence of recent breeding records on the Pacific Coast of northwestern Baja California north of latitude 29°N and Porter et al. (1988, Status and reproductive performance of marine peregrines in Baja California and the Gulf of California, México, in T.J. Cade et al., [Eds.], Peregrine Falcon populations, their management and recovery, Peregrine Fund, Inc., Boise, ID U.S.A.) reported about 70 pairs between 1965–84 in Baja California and Unitt et al. (1995, Noteworthy records of birds in northwestern Baja California, México, *Western Birds* 26:144–154) considered the species as rare, especially in summer. More recently, Castellanos et al. (1997, Peregrine Falcon recovery along the westcentral coast of the Baja California Peninsula, México, *J. Raptor Res.* 31:1–6) found 13 pairs breeding on the westcentral coast of Baja California Sur at El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve and on some islands between 26°30'–28°20'N.

On 8 May 1999 during a field trip to the mouth of Rio El Rosario, Baja California, we found a nest of a pair of Peregrine Falcons on a small cliff on the western slope of the Cerro El Carrizo (elevation 100 m) adjacent to the coast (30°02'32"N, 115°47'15"W). Although peregrines had been previously reported in the area (G. Ruiz-Campos pers. obs.), breeding had not been confirmed. Vegetation adjacent to the nest site included Mediterranean coastal shrub species such as *Euphorbia misera*, *Agave shawii*, *Opuntia prolifera*, *O. littoralis* and *Dudleya* spp. (Delgadillo 1992, Florística y ecología del norte de Baja California, México, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, B.C., México). We observed two adults and two young at the nest. This record is remarkable because it confirms breeding of the Peregrine Falcon as far north as Rio El Rosario (latitude 30°N).

We think this pair of Peregrine Falcons was breeding in this area because of its inaccessibility and lack of human disturbance. In addition, the high diversity of birds in the area, especially waterfowl (Ruiz-Campos and Rodríguez-Meraz 1993, Notas ecológicas sobre la avifauna de la Laguna El Rosario, Baja California, México, *Southwest. Nat.* 38. 59–64), as well as rodents and reptiles, probably provided ample prey.

This report increases our knowledge on the current breeding range of the Peregrine Falcon in Mexico, particularly in Baja California. It also indicates a recent recovery of the species in the area.

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